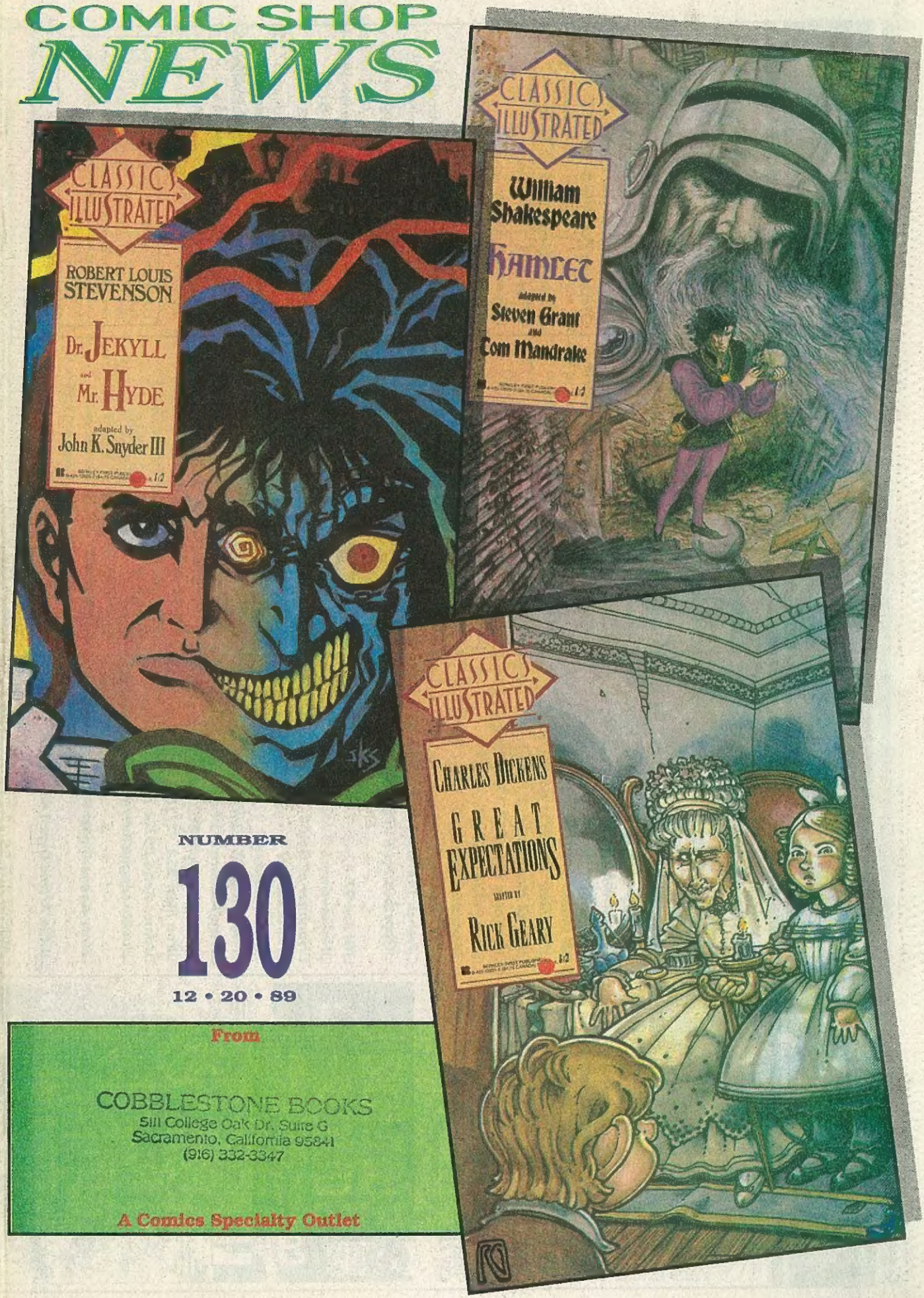
COMIC SHOP NEWS



NUMBER

130

12 • 20 • 89

From

COBBLESTONE BOOKS
511 College Oak Dr. Suite G
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A Comics Specialty Outlet

New Comic Strip "Marshalls" Top Talent

Batman's conquered the paperback, hardcover, comic book, film, videotape, toy, and apparel markets in 1989, so what's left for him? Comic strips, that's what! Beginning on November 6th, 1989, a number of papers added ***Batman*** to their daily comic strip schedule. Even better insofar as comics fans are concerned is the fact that Marshall Rogers, who received a great deal of critical acclaim for his work on Batman in the 1970's, is handling the comic strip's creative honors.

The comic strip is very much inspired by the film, according to Rick Norwood, editor of ***Comics Revue,*** which will begin carrying the strip in its December issue. "The Batman designed by Marshall Rogers for the comic strip is clearly the movie Batman, and the strip begins at the point where the first Batman movie ends. The Joker is apparently dead. Gotham City is abuzz with questions about this Bat Man who did battle with him. Harvey Dent advised Commissioner Gordon not to use the Bat-signal that Batman has given the city. 'Gotham City could be sued for Batman's action.'"

The first serialized story features Catwoman, who--it appears--may be murdering drug pushers. Or *is* she?

The Joker will also return in the comic strip; in fact, the strip rewrote the ending of the film to show that the Joker landed in Gotham Bay after his fall, not on cement.

"Batman is by far the most popular strip we have run," Rick Norwood said. "I hope some of the people who buy ***Comics Revue*** to get the Batman strip will discover how good Modesty Blaise, Steve Canyon, and the other strips we carry are." ***Comics Revue*** features monthly installments of Phantom, Bloom County, Outland, Flash Gordon, Calvin and Hobbes, Hagar the Horrible, Steve Canyon, Gasoline Alley, Latigo, and Modesty Blaise, making it the only comic strip anthology magazine to mix adventure and humor strips, both old and new.

Batman fans who want to add ***Comics Revue*** to their must-have lists as a fourth monthly Bat-book should let their local comic shop folks know as soon as possible; many stores order relatively few extras on magazines of this sort, and you'd hate to miss out! Oh, and tell 'em that ***CSN*** sent you...

by WAYNE LEE

IN THE VIOLENCE RIDDEN SLUM CALLED CRIME ALLEY--
--BATMAN ENCOUNTERS A STREET-GANG MEMBER WHO SURVIVED AN ENCOUNTER WITH...
THE CATWOMAN!?!
HONEST, BATMAN! I THINK YOU GUYS GOT THE SAME TAILOR--

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COMIC SHOP NEWS™
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A Comics Specialty Outlet

Top Talent Tied In To Classics Illustrated

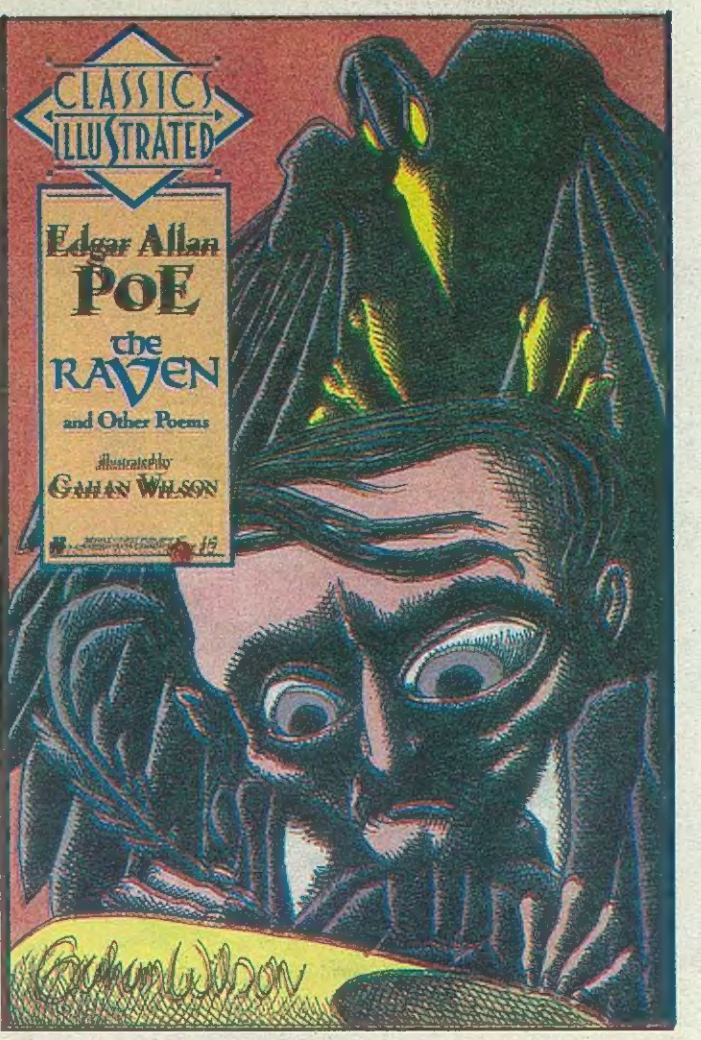
When First Comics initially mentioned its ***Classics Illustrated*** project over a year ago, fan reaction was wildly favorable. That was to be expected, though; after all, Classics Illustrated--in their original incarnations--had perhaps the widest reader base of any comic book series in history. Since their demise, fans have eagerly awaited news that the series might return. What no one expected--or at least no one outside of First Comics--was how strong the professional reaction would be to the return of Classics Illustrated.

"It's still three months to the release of the all-new ***Classics Illustrated*** in January 1990, but we already have a schedule of titles that will take us into early 1992," ***Classics Illustrated*** editorial director Wade Roberts announced in late October.

"Gahan Wilson, Rick Geary, and Bill Sienkiewicz, whose initial work on ***Classics Illustrated*** will launch the series in January 1990, have already settled on their next ***Classics Illustrated*** projects," Roberts said.

Rick Geary has chosen two new projects: Charlotte Bronte's ***Wuthering Heights*** and H.G. Wells' ***Invisible Man***. Bill Sienkiewicz has chosen a work that has lured many other creators, including Orson Welles and Francis Ford Coppola, into attempting adaptations: Joseph Conrad's ***Heart of Darkness***. And Gahan Wilson--well, First won't say exactly *what* he has chosen to adapt, but they will confirm that it's another macabre masterpiece.

Of course, this is nowhere near the entire list of professionals who have joined the ***Classics Illustrated*** team. Mike Ploog is coming back to comics after a decade of film storyboarding to adapt Mark Twain's ***The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.*** Chuck Dixon and Ricardo Villagran are answering Jack London's ***The Call of the Wild***. Charles Vess has chosen ***Arabian Nights*** as his comics domain. Eric Vincent is taking readers far back into the past to hear ***Aesop's Fables.*** Steven Grant and Eric Vincent are venturing to H.G. Wells' ***Island of Dr. Moreau.*** Pat Boyette, pirate artist **par excellence,** is setting sail for Robert Louis Stevenson's ***Treasure Island***. Jeff Busch is reawakening the legend of Washington Irving's ***Rip Van Winkle.*** P. Craig Russell and Jay Geldhof join forces to bring about ***The Fall of the House of Usher.*** Joe Staton takes on a pair of very different works: Charles Dickens' ***A Christmas Carol*** and Voltaire's ***Candide.*** Gary Gianni brings an interesting twist to O'Henry's ***Gift of the Magi and Other Stories.*** Matt Wagner gets to the point of Alexandre Dumas' ***The Three Musketeers.*** And that's not all--but First has to keep a few secrets for now...



"These folks are some of the most talented artists and writers in the field of illustrated storytelling---but you've never seen them do anything as great as the work they're doing on ***Classics Illustrated,***" Roberts said. "Most of the artists have picked their own titles; the novels they've adapting are either their favorite books or those that they've long wanted the opportunity to take on. These are labors of love. It's not surprising, then, that the work they are doing is some of their best ever."

As ***CSN*** has reported, the ***Classics Illustrated*** line will begin in January with the release of ***The Raven and Other Poems*** by Edgar Allan Poe, adapted by Gahan Wilson; ***Great Expectations*** by Charles Dickens, adapted by Rick Geary; ***Through the Looking-Glass*** by Lewis Carroll, adapted by Kyle Baker; and ***Moby Dick*** by Herman Melville, adapted by Bill Sienkiewicz.

In February, two new ***Classics Illustrated*** are slated for release: ***Hamlet*** by William Shakespeare, adapted by Steven Grant and Tom Mandrake; and ***The Scarlet Letter*** by Nathaniel Hawthorne, adapted by P. Craig Russell and Jill Thompson.

Each ***Classics Illustrated*** will be priced at $3.75 for 48 pages of story and art. They should appear on comic shop racks on January 18th.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

NEWSBRIEFS

WEBS 'N' CLAWS

Wolverine and Spider-Man are ready to unite forces in February and March, thanks ***Amazing Spider-Man*** artist **Erik Larsen,** who will be illustrating *and writing* a three-part Wolverine-Spidey team-up for ***Marvel Comics Presents #s*** 48, 49, and 50. In the story, Spidey stumbles across Wolverine as Logan tries to rescue a kidnapped mutant girl from a band of mutant hunters; naturally, they begin by slugging it out with each other (after all, super-heroes are well-known for hitting first and thinking later...), then end up working together to save the young girl. Look for the action to begin on February 22nd. Larsen will be doing the covers for all three issues. (Incidentally, ***Marvel Comics Presents #50***'s cover will be a special in itself: it will feature every hero who has appeared in the pages of the first fifty issues of this bi-weekly anthology title.)

WE ALL GO POGO

If you're a ***Pogo*** fan with a mind for trivia, then you'll love Eclipse's new trade paperback, ***Much Ado: The Pogofenokee Trivia Book***. Within this volume's 64 pages you will find the answer to such questions as: What is Pogo's full name? Which two ***Pogo*** books list an author other than Walt Kelly? What is the original name of the swamp in which Pogo lives? ***Much Ado: The Pogofenokee Trivia Book*** features hundreds of trivia questions about the comic strip; its creator, **Walt Kelly**; and Pogo's life and times. Look for it in mid-February, priced at $4.95.

DRAGONLANCE GRAPHIC NOVELS FIND NEW HOME

While DC has been publishing the ***Dragonlance*** comic book series, TSR retained the publishing rights for the first three ***Dragonlance*** graphic novels. Beginning with ***Dragonlance Saga Graphic Novel #4***, on sale March 1st, DC will take over those ***Dragonlance*** publications as well.

Dragonlance Saga Graphic Novel #4 will be created by **Roy Thomas** and **Tony DeZuniga**--the same team who created the third book for TSR. This graphic novel, priced at $9.95, will adapt Book Two of the Second Volume of the ***Dragonlance Chronicles*** Trilogy. Joining Thomas and DeZuniga are color artist **Sam Parsons** and cover painter **Dave Devries**. The graphic novel will be published in 8.5" x 11" square-bound format, and will feature 80 pages of story and art.

MOEBIUS STRIPS HIGHLIGHTED IN FRENCH TICKLERS

Moebius is such a hot comics creator nowadays that it's hard to imagine that there's a large body of his work that hasn't been featured in English translations at all. That's correct, though; while fans have had a chance to enjoy his sf, super-hero, and western work, they've never had a chance to see his Harvey-Kurtzmanish humor work that he did for French publications over twenty years ago.

French Ticklers, the anthology comic that features outstanding European humor comics work, is remedying that oversight. Each issue features a Moebius segment along with a variety of other humor stories.

French Ticklers #3, on sale in February, will feature *Sergeant Claus* by **Goossens,** the story of a short-stuff Santa Claus during World War II; *Henrietta's Diary* by **Dupuy** and **Berberian**, about a young, overweight girl who gains revenge on a mocking world in her diary; *Dark Designs* by **Andre Franquin**, a social satire; *Carmen Cru* by **Lelong,** the story of an elderly woman who is beset upon by her neighbors, developers, priests, pets, and other pests; and *Kador* by **Binet,** the adventures of the smartest dog in France. Each issue of ***French Ticklers*** will feature 24 black and white pages of story and art intended for mature readers; the comic carries a $2 pricetag.

DUCK POSTERS ARE ALL THEY'RE QUACKED UP TO BE

Carl Barks fans are lucky enough to have a plethora of Barks-related Duck items available to them, from inexpensive comic book reprints to super-high-quality (and super-expensive) continuous-tone lithographs that faithfully reproduce Barks' finest work for big-budget collectors. Until now, though, there hasn't been a modestly expensive signed Barks print that would allow collectors to possess a personally-signed limited edition without throwing their budget out of balance.

With Another Rainbow's release of a three-poster set of signed and numbered limited edition posters presenting three of Barks' finest covers, though, it's possible for *every* Barks collector to afford an investment-quality limited edition without emptying his bank account. Another Rainbow's Barks posters feature *Sailboat, Uncle Scrooge*, and *the Sheriff of Bullet Valley*, all signed by Carl Barks and limited in number.

These limited edition posters should *not* be confused with the 2' x 3' Walt Disney posters produced by Another Rainbow for general distribution. These inexpensive posters feature the same images (as well as a *Mickey and the Beanstalk* illustration) but are printed on the normal good quality gloss paper that frame shops offer on premium poster lines. While the quality of these $8 posters was much better than the average quality of comics posters, these are not the posters that Another Rainbow has used for the quality limited editions.

Black Box, the company who produces Another Rainbow's highly-praised Carl Barks lithographs, was contracted to produce the high-quality deluxe posters. These posters were printed on a very expensive, heavy weight, quality board with a fine-line screen to enhance the image. The quality of these posters is much, much higher than a standard poster--and is, in fact, higher than many of the art prints being offered by other companies.

The set of three limited edition posters, each signed by Carl Barks, will be priced at $240. *No posters from this set will be sold individually.*

Another Rainbow will also make the deluxe quality posters available in unsigned editions for collectors who simply want the highest quality reproduction for wall display. The deluxe unsigned posters will feature the entire four-poster set, including the *Mickey and the Beanstalk* poster, and will be priced at $120 a set. Again, the posters will not be sold individually.

Of course, for fans who simply want quality wall decorations featuring their favorite Disney characters, the standard $8 posters will still be available on an individual basis.

Another Rainbow stresses that they were given the rights to reproduce these paintings as posters on a restricted license. According to Another Rainbow, "The quantity was restricted and *there will never be any more posters done in this series!*"

If you're interested in either the signed limited edition poster set or the unsigned deluxe-poster set, ***CSN*** urges you to talk to the friendly folks at your local comic shop as soon as possible and let them know. Items of this nature tend to sell out quickly and availability is very limited.

ECLIPSE HAS PLENTY TO SAY ABOUT WORDS WITHOUT PICTURES

The first question most comics fans ask about a new book is , "Who's the artist?" That's a question that won't apply to Eclipse's newest trade paperback, though. ***Words Without Pictures*** is a perfect example of truth in advertising: it is a selection of short stories by creators best known for their comic book writing.

Eclipse and Arcane Comics have combined forces to produce this volume of "prose by pros." The 5" x 8" trade paperback will lead off with "The Hypothetical Lizard," an Alan Moore story about a futuristic prostitution ring. Following this is a horror story by Neil Gaiman, "Foreign Parts." The paperback will also include stories by **Jon J. Muth, Charles Vess, Stephen Bissette, Mark Evanier,** and **Ann Nocenti.**

For those fans who can't imagine Eclipse publishing a book without art, there will be a few illustrations: **John Bolton** is supplying caricatures of each story's author, and ***Cynicalman*** creator **Matt Feazell** will supply a "pictures without words" introduction to the book.

Words Without Pictures, a 200-page trade paperback priced at $8.95, will reach comic shops in late February, 1990.

THOMAS AND CONWAY TRAVEL BACK TO HYBORIAN AGE

The upcoming ***Conan the Barbarian*** graphic novel, scheduled for March 1st release, is a a long-lost tale by **Roy Thomas** and **Gerry Conway,** originally intended for the second Conan film but unused. This will be a 64-page Conan story pencilled by **Mike Docherty** and inked by **Tony DeZuniga,** with fully painted color by **Tom Vincent.** It will be priced at $8.95.

DARK HORSE PRESENTS EXTRA PAGES

Dark Horse Presents #40 scheduled for early March release, will be an extra-long issue featuring some of the more popular ***Dark Horse Presents*** standbys. Black Cross, **Chris Warner**'s hero of the post-industrial collapse, continues his odyssey in this issue; Black Cross will also be featured on the cover. **Ron Randall**'s Trekker, **Rich Rice**'s Bob the Alien, **Eddie Campbell**'s Bacchus, and others will be featured in the 48-page issue, which will be priced at $2.95.

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NEWSBRIEFS

GOTHAM SCREAMS AS MR. WHISPER RETURNS

Legend of the Dark Knight #6 begins the second five-part miniseries-within-a-series for this book. **Grant Morrison** and **Klaus Janson** have been tapped for the second five-parter--and they've come up with a tale that's the same sort of grim-and-gritty adventure that readers found in **Denny O'Neil's** and **Ed Hannigan's** *Shaman* storyline.

Man Without a Shadow deals with Mr. Whisper, a serial killer who terrorized Gotham City before Batman came into being. Mr. Whisper's crimes were so heinous that even the city's criminals joined in to stop Mr. Whisper from continuing. Everyone assumed he was dead...

Now someone is taking violent, merciless revenge on those underworld members who joined in to kill Mr. Whisper. Who is it? It appears to be Mr. Whisper himself! ***Legends of the Dark Knight #6*** will be on sale on March 8th; incidentally, this is one Batman title that is available only in comic shops, since DC isn't making it generally available through the ID distribution system.

SPARROW AT PIRANHA

Alison Marek, the creator of Piranha Press' ***Desert Streams, or Miriam's Search For Divine Bliss***, is already at work on her second project for Piranha. ***Sparrow***, a 104-page black-and-white paperback, tells the story of Jumpy McNabb, a problem child who, at the age of five, already has a reputation for causing problems.

"What causes such extraordinary behavior in so young a boy?" **Mark Nevelow**, Piranha's editor, asked. "Is it Jumpy's mother, a tough, loveless woman given to entertaining a host of one-night stands at home? Is it his great-grandfather, an aged gangster who disciplines Jumpy with threats of the 'boy's jail' if he's bad? Is it his junkie father, long absent from Jumpy's life and unable to provide any guidance? Is it his young cousins, wiseguy wannabes eager to recruit the impressionable child? Or is it Jumpy himself? Is he somehow just bad, incapable of any decency or kindness? Not even Jumpy knows."

The 104 page graphic novel, illustrated by Marek in pencil, offers a delicate look at the life of Jumpy, a problem child whose problems aren't easily solved. ***Sparrow*** is scheduled for March 1990 release.

CONAN'S NOREM DE PLUME

SQP's ***Conan Classics Collection***, a series of high-quality portfolios featuring limited edition runs of Conan full-color artwork by some of the better-known Conan illustrators, continues in December. The ***Conan Classics Collection Set Two*** features six plates by artist **Earl Norem**, whose work has appeared on both paperback and magazine covers.

Each plate in the ***Conan Classics Collection*** is reproduced in a larger 11" x 14" format, printed without any type or logos. Each print is reproduced in full color on heavy board. The entire portfolio run is limited to 2000 copies per set, and each one comes with a numbered certificate of authenticity, all enclosed in a plastic slipcase. The ***Conan Classics Collection Set Two: Earl Norem*** is priced at $20--and as with any limited edition of this sort, ***CSN*** urges you to let your local comic shop know as soon as possible that you're interested.

NIGHTSTREETS SET TO SEE LIGHT OF DAY IN FEBRUARY

Nightstreets, the series previously scheduled for late 1989 trade paperback publication by Caliber, has been rescheduled for an early 1990 release, according to publisher Gary Reed.

Nightstreets Book One, which reprints the beginning of the ***Nightstreets*** storyline, will be released in February. Two months later, a second volume will follow; this second volume will feature sixty pages of all-new story and art to complete the storyline.

THE PRICE OF FAME

X-Men #260 sounds like a great issue for the Dazzler: her film is about to be released. Unfortunately, this may not be such good news for her after all. All the attention she has received has motivated an obsessed fan to try to kill her. Why? Because he loves her! ***X-Men #260*** will focus on the Dazzler storyline, but it will also feature a look into the lives of Forge and Banshee, courtesy of **Chris Claremont, Marc Silvestri,** and **Dan Green**. (Incidentally, Marvel has tentative plans to re-release the ***Dazzler: The Movie*** graphic novel in conjunction with this issue).

CAP GOES OUT ON A LIM

Captain America #369 will introduce new Cap artist **Ron Lim**, who will join writer **Mark Gruenwald** to detail the exploits of the star-spangled hero. In Lim's first issue, he gets to draw popular villain Crossbones, who raids the Hellfire Club in hopes of saving the Red Skull. Naturally, the Black Queen and her Hellfire Mercenaries also appear in this issue, which goes on sale February 8th.

A COMEBACK FOR CORMAC

Robert E. Howard fans probably wondered what happened to ***Cormac***, the four-issue limited series Dark Horse had scheduled last spring. Well, one delay led to another, and before you knew it, ***Cormac*** was so late that Dark Horse decided it would be better to get the entire four-issue limited series finished and then reschedule it. Well, everything's finished now, and the **Roy Thomas-E.R. Cruz** series is on schedule for late January 1990. It'll be an easy series to spot--just look for that spiffy **John Bolton** cover that's sure to catch everyone's eye...

CSN SPOTLIGHT

Bob Wayne

Bob Wayne is a busy man; he's one of a relatively small number of comics professionals wearing two hats, so to speak. His primary job is to prepare DC's Coming Comics form that retailers use to order advance comics. In between this job and the various other promotional duties that go along with it, Bob has found the time to write (along with collaborator Lewis Shiner) the upcoming Time Masters series for DC. As if working full-time behind the scenes for DC and writing a comic book series weren't enough, he also scheduled a little bit of time to talk to Comic Shop News about Time Masters.

Why did you decide to bring Rip Hunter back?

At a convention in Austin with Tim Truman and Lew Shiner, and I asked Lew if he was interested in doing ***Rip Hunter Time Master***. We'd talked about the character over the years and we felt it had never been used in the best fashion. He was interested, so I pitched an idea about a conspiracy that stretches across time that Rip Hunter and his men had to fight. Lew started kicking ideas around with me, and Tim Truman got involved, too. We thought we'd never be able to sell it; Tim Truman said that it was a pretty good idea, though, and he suggested we should write it up and sell it to DC.

We both liked the character and the potential of time travel, but we didn't feel that it had been explored in an appropriate fashion. Both Lew and I were science fiction fans as well as comics fans, so we knew what could be done with time-travel stories. I enjoy time travel stories and alternate history stories. The first sf story I remember reading was Andre Norton's ***Quest Crosstime***. I enjoy that particular subgenre.

I went to DC in March of 1987; I had a morning meeting with Paul Levitz for a job in the marketing department, and a meeting in the afternoon with several editors, including Mike Gold and Bob Greenberger. I pitched this series that we had talked about in Austin the previous summer. I thought it would be kind of neat if I could get a job or sell a series. I didn't realize that I'd end up doing both.

Rip Hunter isn't your first comics work published, is it?

No, I've already had a Cave Carson origin published in ***Secret Origins***. Cave Carson spun out of all the work I did developing Cave Carson for the ***Time Masters*** series. I had so many things left over that didn't fit in that I went to Mark Waid and said, "I have this idea for Cave Carson's secret origin; if Tim Truman will draw it, are you interested?" He said sure because he didn't think Tim would have time do do it; Tim did, so we did it, and it ended up coming out before ***Time Masters***. It was created after Time Masters, though.

I also sold some stories to Charlton back in the 70's, so no, this isn't my first stuff. I was a victim of the Charlton implosion, so I didn't do very much work for the company. I had at least one thing published, in ***Scary Tales #4***.

What's the concept of the new Time Masters series?

Rip Hunter is the post-crisis-continuity. This is a reworked Rip Hunter, who has only made two time travel trips, both involving Booster Gold. One of the premises we have is that, in the DC Universe, time travel is very difficult to do; it takes a great deal of energy, it's stressful, and any time travel method known to Rip Hunter can be used only one time by him. The fact that Rip Hunter has travelled in time two times means that he cannot travel in time any more using these methods; he is trying to find a new method of time travel so that if he has to make a one-way suicide trip through time, he can.

He's gathered a crew to help him investigate this conspiracy through time. In each issue, we go further and further back into the past; we start rolling back into the past very quickly in this series, giving us a chance to pull in some DC heroes from different eras. We do take him back to the age of dinosaurs, also, because you really can't do a time travel story without dinosaurs.

Jonah Hex and Bat Lash are bodyguards. We go back in time to the old West. We also go to colonial North America and meet George Washington and Tomahawk. We also meet the Viking Prince, Arion when he is an old man, and we have cameos by Doc Magnus, Cave Carson,Green Lantern, Superman, and other Justice League members. The series intersects with a number of other DC series.

One crossover is a little more complicated. Animal Man will be making an appearance in ***Time Masters #4***, and we'll be having Rip Hunter appearing in ***Animal Man #22*** at the same time. Grant Morrison is writing the ***Animal Man*** issue; we sent Grant an overview of what we're doing and how we're treating the character and how we thought Animal Man and Rip Hunter would interact; Grant took that and used that as a springboard, and did the story his way in the Animal Man style. We're taking the same stuff and doing it in our book; it's kind of like looking at two different personalities, seeing the same event through each of their senses.

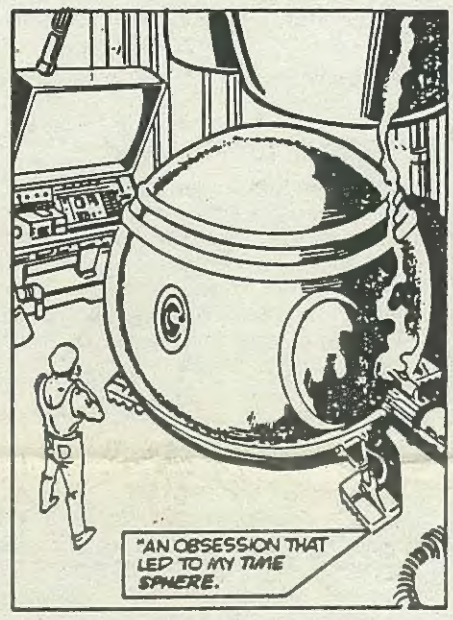
Batman does *not* appear in any of the eight issues, incidentally, bucking an industry-wide perception about a new DC book.

The ***Time Masters*** series has a definite ending to it. We won't close the doors completely on the possibility of follow-up stories, but it's a tightly plotted series with a real conclusion, not just an ending. However, there is an open door at the end to bring the Time Masters back if we get a strong enough response.,

Who's illustrating Time Masters?

Art Thibert is the penciller; his previous work has appeared in ***Warlord***, ***Teen Titans Spotlight***, and on ***Checkmate*** covers, and he's now the regular inker on ***Adventures of Superman***. Jose Marzan Jr. is the inker; he was once one of Joe Rubinstein's assistants, but he's been soloing on ***Haywire***, ***Dr. Strange***, and other books.

DC helped me find Art Thibert; we didn't know each other prior to this series. DC--in particular Bob Greenberger and Dick Giordano--came up with a list of people with appropriate styles. These were people who were free to do an eight-issue series. This would require



that the artist be able to draw all the other characters who are featured in ***Time Masters*** so that we didn't have to footnote everything for recognition. That was a pretty short list.

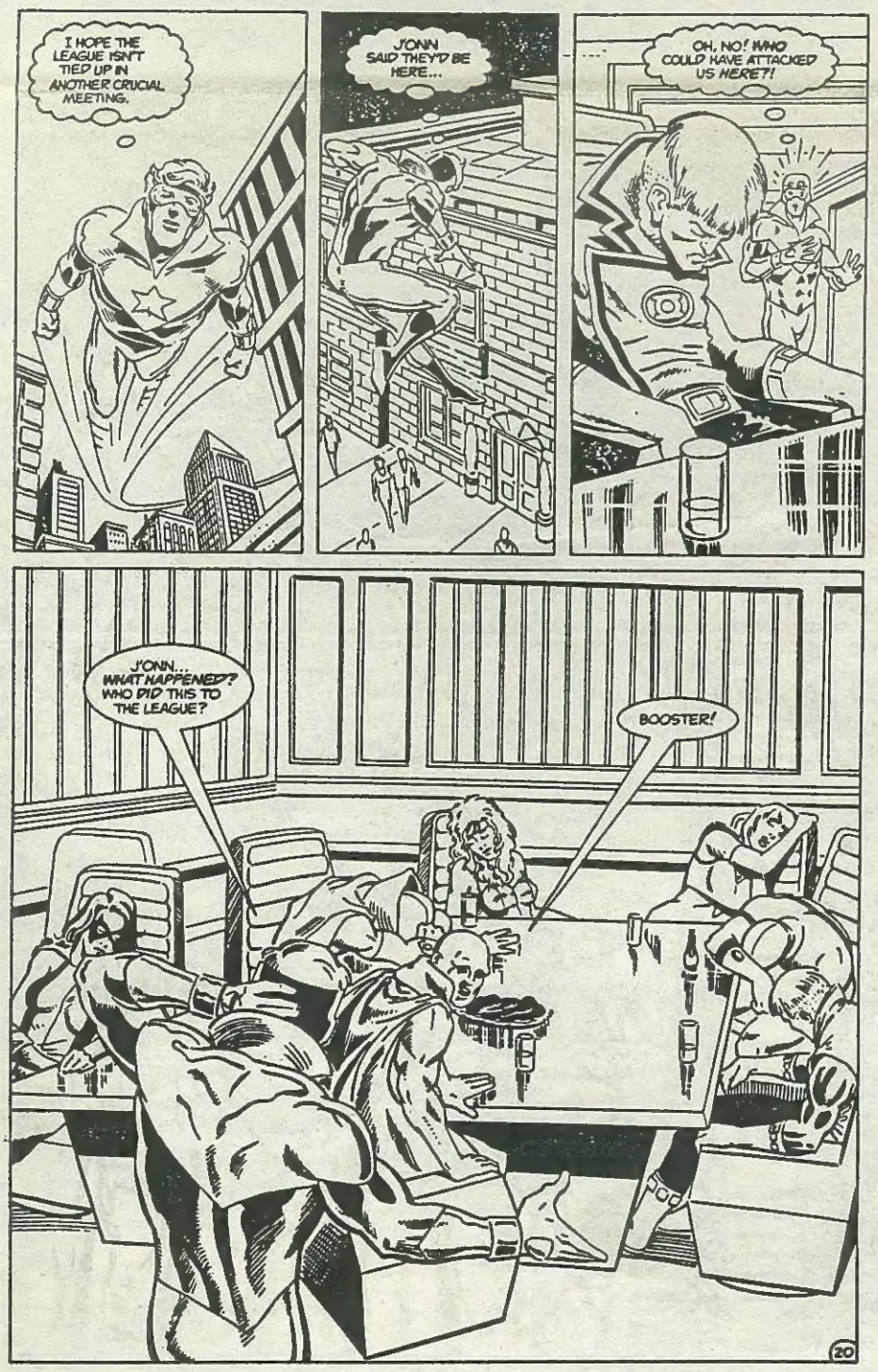
Bob had worked as an editor of ***Warlord*** when Art had done a few fill-in issues of that. Art also did a few ***Who's Who*** pages that pleased folks, so he came with good recommendations. Bob and I had breakfast with Art at the San Diego Con and came to an agreement that he would do the book. From that point on, we worked with Art very closely, sending him reference and photocopies.

Art's work will please readers; in the course of the eight issues of ***Time Masters***, he grows and develops. He's good from the start, but he gets much better. I tried to allow the artist to do the illustrations on the book without having the text get in the way. We did as much as we could to try to tell the story through the pictures. I tried to be as terse as possible.

How did Lew Shiner come to be involved in this?

Lew Shiner and I have been friends for over fifteen years. He's a long time comics fan. At one time, we put out a fanzine called ***Tales From Texas***, we put on conventions, we attended conventions, and we have a shared interest in both comics and sf/fantasy. He's working on a lot of other projects right now in comics; he'll be the primary writer for the Epic ***Wild Cards*** book. He has other proposals out there as well. He's also a contributor to the ***Wild Cards*** prose series.

Lewis lives in Austin and I live in New York City. We're not getting together every week and looking over each other's shoulder when


I HOPE THE LEAGUE ISN'T TIED UP IN ANOTHER CRUCIAL MEETING.
J'ONN SAID THEY'D BE HERE...
OH, NO! WHO COULD HAVE ATTACKED US HERE?!
J'ONN... WHAT HAPPENED? WHO DID THIS TO THE LEAGUE?
BOOSTER!
20

CSN SPOTLIGHT

Lewis Shiner

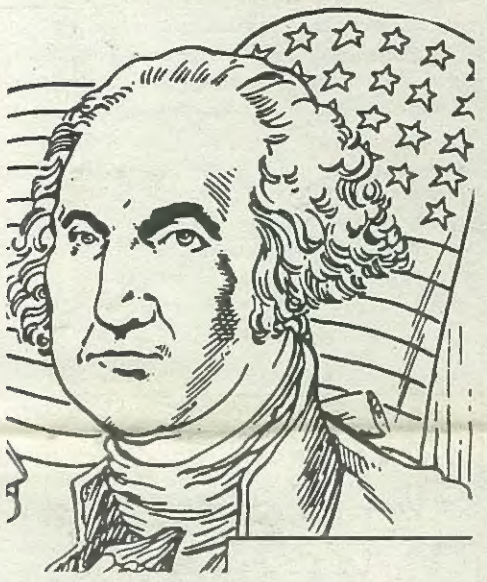
to

we're collaborating on things, but we have a system that works for us.

We agreed on the skeletal outline of the story in a meeting that followed up our first discussion of the story; from that point, we pretty much took turns doing the writing. One of us would do a page-by-page breakdown, and the next one would do a breakdown, but we both use the same word processing program for the IBM, so we just mailed a disk back and forth until we were pleased with it. At one time, someone would plot it and the other would do a finished plot, and other times we would reverse it. We did it all by mail; we could have modemed it, but we used the mail instead.

When did the actual series work begin?

We started working on the first script before we had an artist; that would have been sometime around March 1987. It's taken until December



1989 to get it out. Actually, it was proposed at one time that we put out eight first and end up with number one, but we decided to go with standard numbers so as not to confuse people too much.

Do you have other comics work planned?

I certainly do, but it's not scripting. I work on all my DC staff work, which is quite demanding on its own. This series has been pretty time-consuming because of al the research, both historical and comics continuity; it's been eating up a lot of my time. My wife might like to have conversations with me occasionally. That's why I have nothing on line after this.

However, if someone else has a good Cave Carson series they'd like me to write...

I have a real soft spot for these more action-oriented heroes who never had the more popular success of costumed heroes. I enjoyed those types of books. Those books were easier to collect because no one was asking high prices for them, even when other books seemed expensive.

You mention your job at DC; a lot of readers don't know what you do, since it's "behind-the-lines" work.

That's because of the nature of my job. When I'm hanging around this office, I have several functions that I try to carry out; the main thing is that I operate as liaison between DC Comics and the retailers and the direct market. Through ***Coming Comics*** and trade shows and the like, I try to explain what DC is doing, why DC is doing it, and to take feedback from retailers and explain to the folks at DC what those wacky fans out here want. I tell DC what the fans are pleased with and what they don't care for. I translate publisher-ese to retailer-ese. I'm in charge of all of DC's convention participation, retailer promotions, personal appearances, ***Coming Comics***, previews, and the things of that type.

I also discuss DC's scheduling; I try to utilize my knowledge from having worked as a comics retailer from a number of years and 30 years as a comic reader, and I try to combine that with a knowledge of marketing and try to bring all those things to the marketing department at DC.

Lewis Shiner, Bob Wayne's collaborator on Time Masters, is a full-time writer. When he isn't working in comics, he's busy writing award-winning science fiction, working on the Wild Cards paperback series, and putting the finishing touches on a mainstream novel. He took a little time to answer some questions for CSN about his involvement in Time Masters and in the upcoming Epic Comics Wild Cards series that is tentatively scheduled to begin next June.

Since you and Bob live so far apart, and you're pretty accustomed to writing solo, just how easy was it to collaborate with a writer half a country away?

It was just a natural for me and Bob; we've known each other for 15 years or so, and he knew my background with the character of Rip Hunter. I was a big ***Showcase*** fan in the early 60's; it was my favorite title, and I love the comics that were spun out of iut. This would be the heyday of the new Silver Age characters, with ***Rip Hunter*** and ***Cave Carson*** and ***Aquaman*** and the like--that's the era we're talking about here. I loved that stuff; it was the adventure groups, though, that really interested me. I was reading stuff like Jules Verne, adventure novels and the like, so the adventure groups appealed to me more than the superheroes did. Even with the Atom, a character I liked a lot, there was an adventure cast to the stories; the world becomes very strange when you shrink to that size, you see.

You have a writing career outside comics, don't you?

I've been publishing science fiction since the late 1970's; between sf and horror and fantasy, I've published forty or fifty short stories, two novels, and I have a third one on the way. The next one is called ***Slam,*** from Doubleday. It's a mainstream novel about skateboarding and anarchy and prison and underground economy.

How much advance planning went into the Time Masters Series?

We discussed it pretty thoroughly before we ever began writing. Because of the structure of the limited series, we had to decide what eras to hit and what characters to pick up, and that gave us our one-time-jump per issue format. The eight issue format seemed to instinctively feel like the right size for the story we had planned. At that point, we pretty much alternated the writing; one issue I'd do a plot and Bob would do a script, and the other other issue would be the other way around. We picked which eras we were most interested in: I wanted do ancient Egypt and I put dibs on Jonah Hex. Bob was good friend with Paul Kupperberg, so he was in a position to sit down with Paul and work out the Atlantis stuff, so he claimed Arion.

You're also heavily involved in the Wild Cards series for Epic, aren't you?

I got roped into the ***Wild Cards*** comic series in a roundabout way; George was very interested in trying to do something with the comic book rights, which is a natural concept since the characters are superhero type characters anyway. ***Wild Cards*** grew out of the love of comics that the various writers had.

George had tried to get some interest at the various companies by sending them the books, but as anyone who has worked much in the field knows, you don't get a contract that way. They won't read 300,000 words of material to find out if they want to take on the project. They want to know what it looks like, what shape it will take. George didn't put an organized presentation together for DC, so we didn't get a good reception there.

I took over at that point and did a very concrete proposal and firmed it up, worked out a way of dealing with the material and so forth; the next stop on the agenda was obviously Epic. They have a very good deal there, with friendly people, good quality books, and so forth. Archie Goodwin, at the time, was still Epic's editor. He was very interested, and he and George had numerous discussions about ***Wild Cards*** even before this. I put together a fairly coherent proposal. My first thought on this was to adapt book two of the series, the reason being that historical comics--that is, comics that try to present the history of the characters instead of a single story--tend not to do very well, so we wanted something contemporary, showing the characters in action in the present day rather than showing how they came about. I worked out a way of adapting Book Two, and Archie liked the idea well enough to completely throw out my proposal and start from scratch. That sounds strange, but it's true.

Archie's point was that we would do better getting original material rather than doing straight

CSN SPOTLIGHT

adaptations. He wanted a consistent continuity between the books and the comics. This would require people to read both the books and the comics to find out everything that was going on, which is a very commercial idea. It's also very difficult to carry out, but I came up with a way to do it.

Archie was also very keen on the bookshelf format. We decided that if our issue bookshelf series would be the right length. I came up with a plot that would be the best of both worlds: it would be a story featuring Jake Ackroyd. It was to be a murder mystery; as he pursued the various clues, he would talk to the various ***Wild Card*** characters and force them to have flashbacks in which they would recapitulate their origins.

I 'm having the creators of the characters write the origin stories; I allotted *x* number of pages for each of them, I gave Howard Waldrop 10 pages for Jetboy, Melissa Snodgrass 12 pages for Tachyon, and so on. I worked them into the script. You have a certain amount of material I've written by myself serving as the primary storyline, and some of their material as well, woven into the mystery story, to form one story. We'll have various artists doing the flashbacks, with Bill Willingham doing the bridge material if he can fit it into his schedule. He seems very enthusiastic about it, so I think he'll be pretty definitely the artist for the bridge material. We're approaching some very popular artists to do the other material. There's a good pool of talent to tap, and if we can sign them as we hope to, we're going to have a book that'll have a tremendous fan appeal.

Wild Cards is currently planned as a four-issue limited series; if it's successful, will we see more?

There are plans for future series if this one does well. This may be overly optimistic, but I think it will do really well, and so do the folks at Epic. My current plan envisions a mixture of novels, comics series, and the regular books.

The ***Wild Cards*** book series has recently started including novels; there are two novels due out, Melinda Snodgrass will be doing a Tachyon book as one of them. When George was soliciting proposals for novels, a couple of proposals were turned in that didn't make the final cut. They were good stoires, but we had to choose the best from all the good stories. My tentative plan, if the first series is a success, is to take these novel proposals and jump off from there. This gives us the best of both worlds; the novels were designed to interface with the ongoing stories but to have an independent coherence. I have a scheme in mind as to how to make it collaborative and get the other writers, the ones who developed the original proposals, involved in it.

I think the bookkeeping end and the art end will be more difficult than the script end. The script for the limited series has been turned in, and it worked really well. Everyone was very happy and agreed with the changes that were made and so forth. I was handling all that stuff myself; it was a fairly simple deal to work it all into a cohesive package. The Epic people are ending up with a big chunk of script that's in the same typeface and consistent throughout; that's my job. There's a lighter feel to the comic book series that I'm happy with; it isn't as grim as the books.

We have some procedures that we've developed over the years working on ***Wild Cards***, so we all work together pretty well now. The nicest thing about ***Wild Cards*** is that everyone seems to care more about the quality of the project than about their own egos. That's why the quality is there.

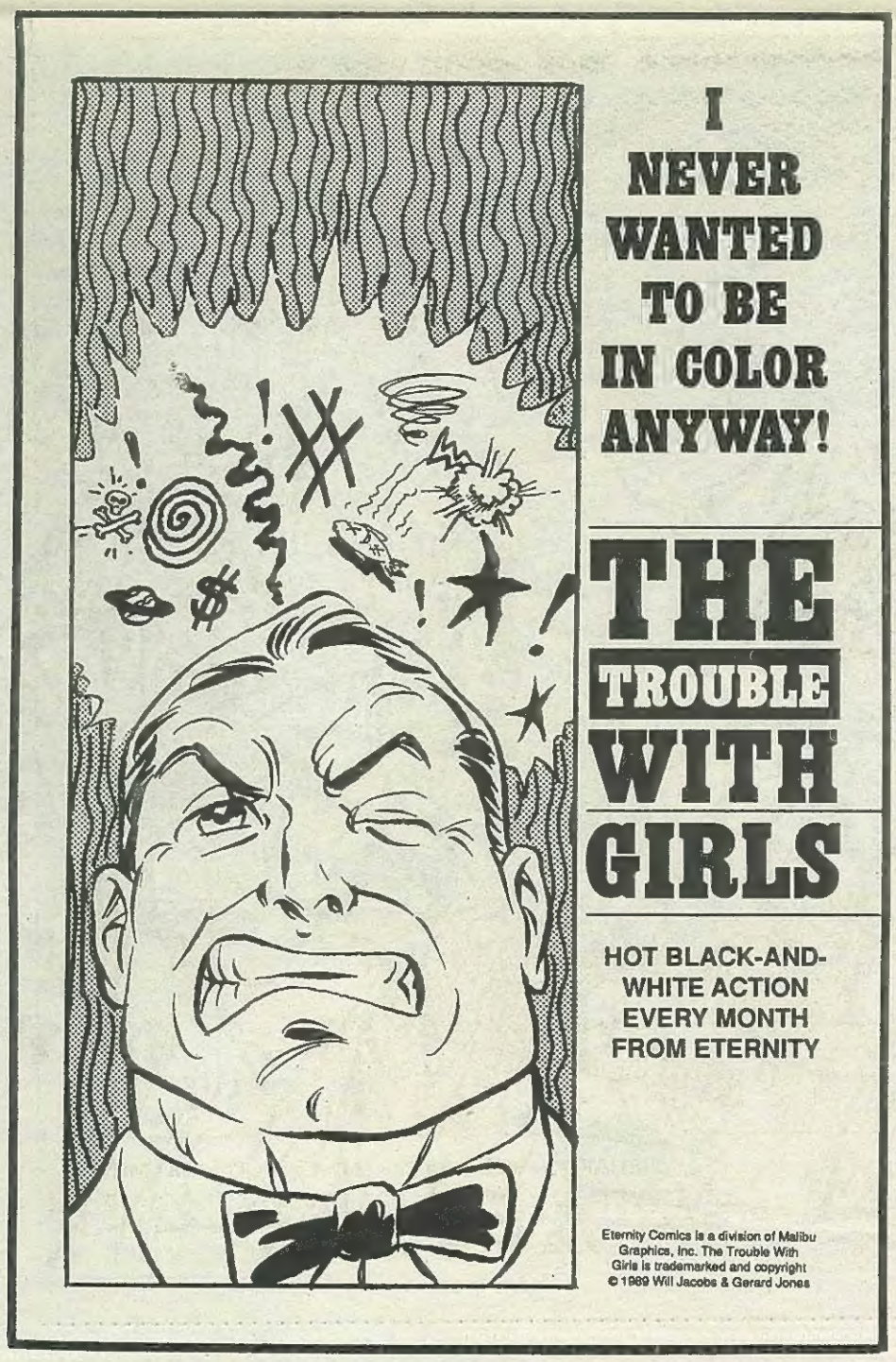
The transition to comics is even easier because a lot of the people who work on ***Wild Cards*** are still comics fans. Melinda, I don't think, reads a lot of comics, so she needs the most coaching. George Martin is a big comics fan; Joward Waldrop reads some, but he's mostly into the older stuff, being a big Golden Age fan. John Miller is a big fan as well.

The novels will be published in conjunction with future paperback collections; we fell into an unintentional pattern because of the way the book contracts worked. We were contracted for three books at a time. More or less by accident, the first 3 books formed a thematic trilogy; Bantam really liked that structure, and they've encouraged us to continue that idea. Books 4-6 were to have worked that way, but Book 6 got too long and had to be split into *two* books. We're currently in the middle of the next trilogy. What will be ***Wild Cards Book 8***, the first of the Jumper Triad, is due to be turned in pretty soon. Melinda's book will be a sort of auxiliary novel between the second collection and the full mosaic.

Do you have any other comics projects in the works?

I'm working on other things, but I can't talk about 'em at this time. I have a limited series that's at least a year off before I can start work on it; we're putting things in place to get the characters I want. I also have an original character that I'm trying to turn into an ongoing series in conjunction with Elliott Maggin.

One thing I've learned about the comics business is that projects are very slow getting started, but once they get started, it becomes a crisis situation with everyone working their brains out. So far, things have worked out really well and I haven't been so flooded that I haven't had to miss any deadlines.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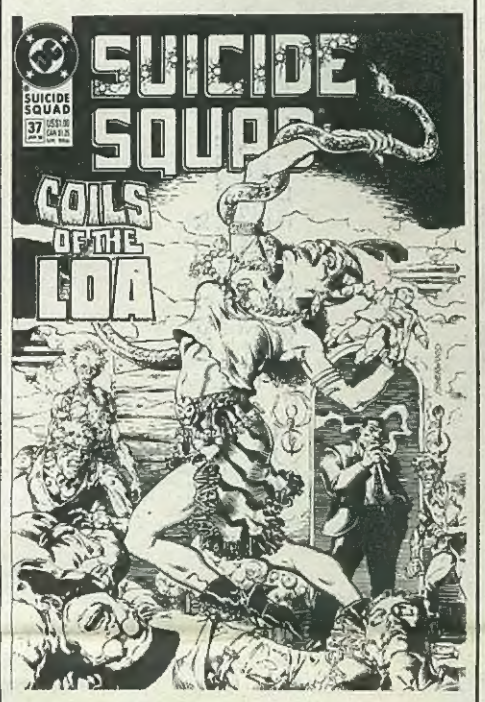
CSN QUICKLIST

The upcoming comics quicklist is a listing of scheduled titles and the dates that they should arrive in comics shops across the country. That doesn't mean that the books will always be in your shop on the date listed: some publishers ship from different parts of the country, and the farther away the publisher is from your local comic shop, the longer it will take the books to get to you.

Each entry presents the title and number of the book, followed by the release date; if a title doesn't have a scheduled release date, we don't give you a date. After that is the Publisher of the comic and the price. This quicklist presents the titles that are supposed to ship during the rest of December. A complete checklist of titles due in January will appear in *CSN 132.*



❑***A1 3*** Atomeka $5.95
❑***Akira 16*** 12/28 Marvel $3.50
❑***Alien Legion 15*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Aliens Vs. Predator 1*** Dark Horse $2.25
❑***Archie 375*** 12/21 Archie $1
❑***Avengers 314*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Bad Axe 3*** Adventure $2.25
❑***Baoh 1*** 12/21 Viz $2.95
❑***Bat 1*** Apple $2.25
❑***Bayou Billy 4*** 12/21 Archie $1
❑***Betty & Me 181*** 12/21 Archie $1
❑***Birthright 2*** Fantagraphics $2
❑***Body Count 1*** Aircel $2.25
❑***Caliber Christmas 1*** Caliber $3.95
❑***Captain Harlock 3*** Eternity $1.95
❑***Cerebus 129*** Aardvark-Vanaheim $2
❑***Cheval Noir 5*** Dark Horse $3.50
❑***Classic X-Men 44*** Marvel $1.25
❑***Cloak & Dagger 10*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Comics Express 2*** 12/21 Eclipse $2.95
❑***Complete Pogo Comics TPB 2*** 12/21 Eclipse $7.95
❑***Conan 229*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Conan Saga 35*** 12/28 Marvel $2.25
❑***Cosmic Heroes 11*** Eternity $3.95
❑***Cry for Dawn 1*** Cry For Dawn $2.25
❑***Crying Freeman 3*** 12/28 Viz $3.50
❑***Damage Control II 4*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***Dark Horse Presents 36*** Dark Horse $1.95
❑***Demon Hunter 1*** Aircel $1.95
❑***Destroyer 5*** 12/21 Marvel $2.25
❑***Detective 611*** 12/21 DC $1
❑***Doctor Fate 14*** DC $1.50
❑***Doctor Strange 14*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Dominion 3*** 12/28 Eclipse $2
❑***Dracula 1*** Eternity $2.50
❑***Dragonforce 13*** Aircel $2.25
❑***Dragonlance 16*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Dreadstar 53*** 12/21 First $1.95
❑***Eagle 23*** Apple $2.25
❑***El Diablo 6*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Excalibur 19*** 12/21 Marvel $1.50
❑***Eye of Mongombo 3*** Fantagraphics $2
❑***Fantastic Four 337*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***Fish Police 21*** Apple $2.25
❑***Forgotten Realms 7*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Fox Comics 25*** Fantagraphics $2.95
❑***French Ticklers 2*** Kitchen Sink $2
❑***Ghostbusters II TPB*** 12/21 NOW $8.95
❑***GI Joe 97*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Halloweiners 2*** Mirage $1.75
❑***Hammer of God 3*** 12/28 First $1.95
❑***Hardcore GN*** Piranha $9.95
❑***Hawk & Dove 9*** 12/21 DC $1
❑***Hellblazer 27*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Hero Alliance 7*** Innovation $1.95
❑***Incredible Hulk 366*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Iron Man 253*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***James Bond 007 2*** Eclipse $3.95
❑***Justice League International Special 1*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Katy Keene Digest 9*** 12/21 Archie $1.50
❑***Little Archie Digest 41*** 12/21 Archie $1.50
❑***Marvel Age 85*** 12/21 Marvel .75
❑***Marvel Comics 44*** 12/28 Marvel $1.25
❑***Marvel Fanfare 49*** 12/21 Marvel $1.95
❑***Marvel Tales 234*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Maze Agency 11*** Innovation $1.95
❑***Michelangelo 1*** Mirage $1.75
❑***Mickey Mouse 256*** Gladstone $1.95
❑***Mighty Tiny 1*** Antarctic $1.75

Have you seen anything in this issue of ***Comic Shop News*** that you can't live without? Make sure you don't miss it; clip this handy coupon and write down the things that you want you comics shop owner to be sure to get for you!

Name_____

Address _____

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Phone _____

I gotta have 'em! Please reserve for me the following items mentioned in ***Comic Shop News!***

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Be sure to give this to your retailer. Do not send it to CSNI Your comics shop will make every effort to get the items you want; some items may require a down payment before your shop owner can get them for you; be sure to ask!

❑***Mike Grell's Sable 2*** 12/21 First $1.75
❑***Mirage Mini-Comics Set*** Mirage $11.95
❑***Moon Knight 11*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Mr. X 9*** Vortex $2
❑***Nam 41*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind GN*** 12/21 Viz $13.95
❑***New Titans 63*** 12/21 DC $1.75
❑***Nexus Legends 12*** 12/21 First $1.75
❑***Ninja High School 17*** Eternity $1.95
❑***One TPB*** King Hell $14.95
❑***Outlanders 13*** Dark Horse $2.25
❑***Outlanders Collection Volume 1*** Dark Horse $9.95
❑***Police Academy 6*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Punisher 30*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Punisher War Journal 15*** 12/28 Marvel $1.50
❑***Retief 1*** Adventure $2.25
❑***Ring 2*** 12/21 DC $4.95
❑***Ripper 2*** Aircel $2.50
❑***Roachmill 8*** Dark Horse $1.75
❑***Sable 26*** 12/28 First $1.95
❑***Savage Henry 14*** Vortex $2
❑***Secret Origins 47*** 12/21 DC $1.75
❑***Sherlock Holmes 18*** Eternity $2.25
❑***SHIELD 8*** 12/21 Marvel $1.50
❑***Shuriken: Cold Steel 6*** Eternity $1.95
❑***Silver Surfer 34*** 12/21 Marvel $1
❑***Silverback 3*** 12/21 Comico $2.25
❑***Sinbad 2*** Adventure $2.25
❑***Snake 1*** Special $3.50
❑***Spectacular Spider-Man 161*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***Spirit 62*** Kitchen Sink $2
❑***Star Trek 5*** 12/21 DC $1.50
❑***Steven 1*** Kitchen Sink $2.95
❑***Street Music 5*** Fantagraphics $2.50
❑***Superman 40*** 12/21 DC .75
❑***Tapping the Vein 3*** 12/21 Eclipse $6.95
❑***Team Nippon 7*** Aircel $1.95
❑***Thor 414*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***Tiger-X 4*** Eternity $1.95
❑***Time Masters 1*** 12/21 DC $1.75
❑***Torpedo 6*** Catalan $11.95
❑***Transformers 63*** 12/28 Marvel $1
❑***Trouble With Girls 10*** Eternity $1.95
❑***Usagi Yojimbo 20*** Fantagraphics $2
❑***Walking Dead 4*** Aircel $2.25
❑***War of the Worlds TPB*** Eternity $9.95
❑***What If? 10*** 12/21 Marvel $1.25
❑***What's Michael? TPB*** 12/28 Eclipse $7.95
❑***Wilderness Book I: Borderland TPB*** 4Winds $12.95/$19.95/$59.95
❑***X-Factor 51*** 12/28 Marvel $1

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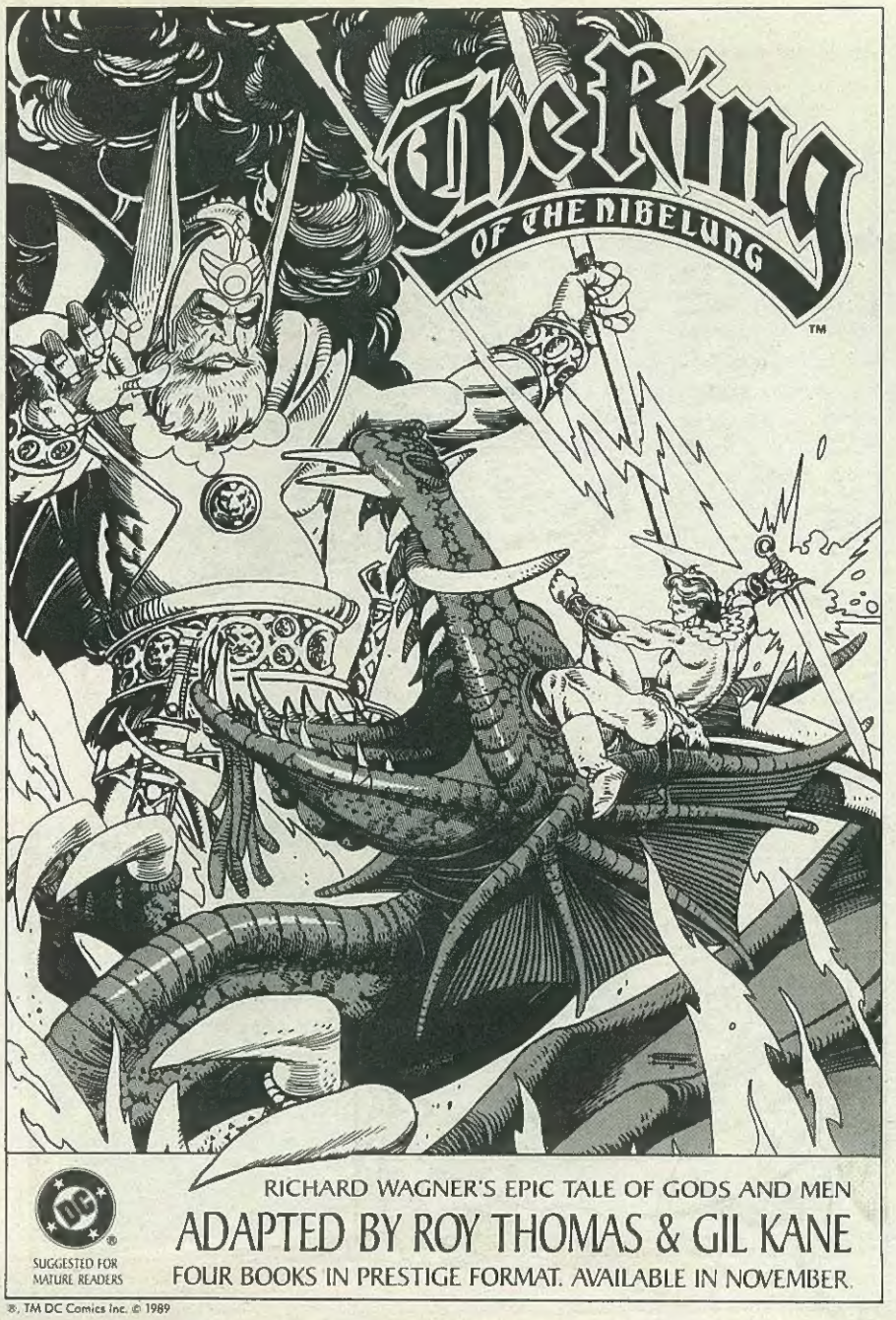

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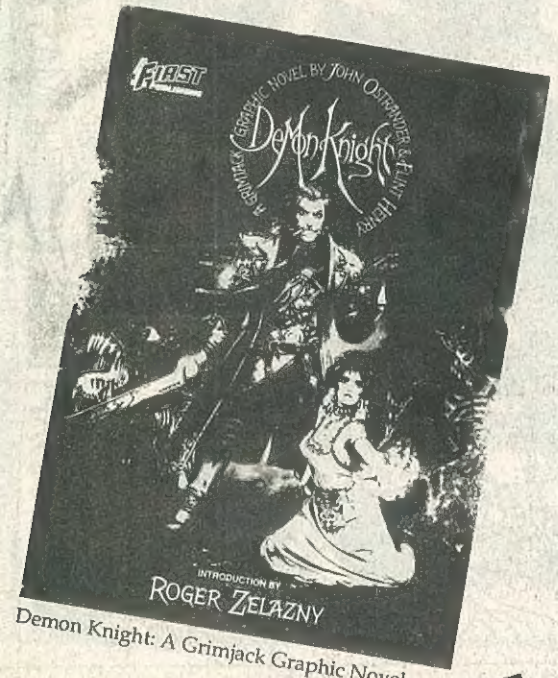
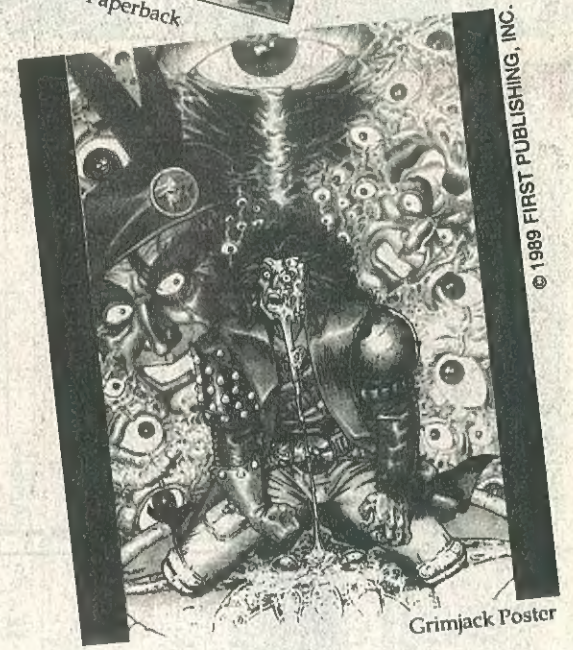


Demon Knight: A Grimjack Graphic Novel

Next Nexus Trade Paperback

The Nexus Family Portrait



Grimjack Poster

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